VESTIGES

OF

OXFORD CASTLE.

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OXFORD CASTLE.

OR

A SMALL FRAGMENT OF A WORK,

INTENDED TO BE PUBLISHED SPEEDILY;

ON

THE HISTORY OF ANTIENT CASTLES;

AND ON THE

PROGRESS OF ARCHITECTURE.

BY

EDWARD KING, ESQ. F. R. S. AND F. A. S.

K

Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis. Hor. Ep.

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G.R. III.
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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER.

THIS account of Oxford Castle may perhaps too justly be censured, for beginning very abruptly:—but the reason of its doing so is; that these pages are only printed as loose extracts from the Author's manuscript of a much larger work; in which their contents immediately follow a preceding account of Arundel Castle.

They form therefore a mere fragment, thus published in a detached manner; solely for the sake of doing justice, as early as possible, to the exertions of Mr. Harris, in making some very curious recent discoveries at Oxford: and to take this opportunity of announcing to the Public, the intention of quickly sending to the press, if it pleases God to spare the Author's life, the whole of the work from whence they are extracted; containing the History of Antient Castles, and of the Progress of Architecture.—Which work is now nearly completed: all the drawings being finished; and the greater part of the written copy prepared for printing.

It is, however, purposed to be published, not all at once; but gradually: at such intervals of time, as may best accord with the progress made in the execution of the engravings; and with the Author's health, and convenience.

And it will be published in separate books, or parts; of different bulks: in order that each distinct publication may contain a distinct dissertation.—Whilst the prices of the different parts will be different; and fairly adapted to the quantity of letter-press, and to the number of plates contained in each.

But, as the expence of this work, to the Publisher, will unavoidably be very great; and as it will be necessary, in some degree, for him to be able to ascertain what number of copies are to be printed off; persons willing to become purchasers, are requested to send in their names, and places of abode, to

Mr. George Nicol, Bookseller to his Majesty, No. 58,
Pall-Mall:

and this request is the rather made; because, under his care and direction, the impressions of the Plates will be scrupulously delivered, in the very order in which the names are given in.

In the mean time it may be proper just to add; that the design of this undertaking is; to elucidate the history of the whole gradual progress of Architecture, in all its branches; both ecclesiastical, civil, and military, in successive periods, in this country: and to afford, a striking illustration of coeval, and contemporary manners; and an elucidation of several obscure ordinances in feudal, and other laws: giving clear proofs of the one; by means of the most unquestionable remaining specimens of many antient structures, now brought into one point of view, and compared together:—and evincing the other; by means of the comparison of these with the most positive evidence of antient records, and historians; from the age of the first

Britons, down to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Whilst, at the same time, in the course of the investigation, much light will, from the very nature of the inquiry, be cast on the history and manners of those primeval eastern nations, and on those patriarchal ages, from whence many of the first ideas of building, and of rearing either fortresses, or sacred structures, were unquestionably derived.

Many interesting passages, also, in the Sacred Writings, and in the most antient Classic authors, will, it is hoped, be found to receive a more satisfactory illustration, from the efforts in the present undertaking, than could well have been obtained, by any other means, than this one, of an actual comparison of such passages with the very kind of fabrics, manners, and usages, referred to in them.—Fabrics, manners, and usages, well understood, indeed, at the time, when those books were written; and therefore only so slightly, and incidentally mentioned:—but the reference to which, in these days, unavoidably occasions very frequently much confusion of ideas; and much obscurity; even to the most learned.

Such is the short sketch of the plan of this work. To which, it is a piece of common justice to add; that although, in these present pages, the Author is under a necessity of correcting a mistake of the ingenious Mr. Grose; and will even be obliged to do so, in one or two other instances; yet both the laborious and valuable work of Mr. Grose, and the works of many other antiquaries, and curious travellers, will, it is trusted, be rendered still more highly interesting than ever; and become daily more useful; by means of the continual references that will be made, both

to their engravings, and observations, in the course of the remarks that will be now offered to the Public.

For every additional information will here, diligently, be called in aid; to render the elucidation of the whole subject as complete as possible. And it is most earnestly wished by the Author, that, in return for assistance received from the prior labours of inquisitive and learned men, those labours may now receive, from him, the just tribute of a fresh accession of light; and of being themselves placed in a still more advantageous and useful point of view.

To effect this the more fully, some Chronological Tables will be added; both of the successive changes, and improvements, that have been made in the state of Architecture in general; and of the different æras of the various parts, of some of our most Venerable Religious Structures. And additional help will be given to assist the contemplative mind, whilst traversing the long drawn isle, to pass on, with apprehensive ideas, of all the surrounding specimens of successive alterations, deviations, and improvements, that have taken place, in the style of building, from age to age.

OXFORD CASTLE.

Coæval with Arundel Castle, in the successive periods of its existence, and very similar to it, when in its most perfect state, seems to have been the antient Castle of Oxford; as far as any authentick traces of the original plan can be obtained.

The vestiges of this most interesting Stronghold have very lately been brought to light, under the neighbouring influence, and patronage of my Lord Earl Harcourt, one of the most noble encouragers of these sort of curious researches; and by the indefatigable labours of Mr. Harris, who has the present custody of the spot; and whose skill as an architect and builder, has enabled him to search out every part with minuteness. Notwithstanding therefore so small a portion of the structure now remains, yet, by means of tracing old foundation walls, (the existence of which has been thus ascertained); and by attending, at the same time, to the information given us from the Rolls in the Pipe Office, and Record Office in the Tower;* and to the description (as far as it goes,) given in antient manuscripts in the Bodleian library; even the whole original form, and state of this once most important Fortress, may now be fully explained: and that, in perfect consistency with the uniform plan and design of these kind of buildings, which has been investigated in the preceding parts of this work. Explained also in such a manner, as to give us even a tolerable idea both of its primæval *Saxon* appearance; and of its exact conformity, afterwards, when improved in the earliest *Norman* ages, to the style of fortification introduced by that ostentatious, and powerful people.

* Most of these are referred to in Sir John Peshall's edition of Anthony Wood's Oxford—and some others I was favoured with as extracted by Mr. Price.

Leland,* Dugdale,+ and Camden,‡ on the authority of antient traditions and records, affirm that the Castle of Oxford was built by *Robert D'Oiley*, who came into England with William the Conqueror.—And the Chronicles of *Osney* Abbey§ even ascertain the precise date of this great Baron's undertaking the work:—telling us, "that it was "built by Robert D'Oiley, the first of that name in England, A. D. "1071; being, as *Rossus* delivers, the fifth year after the Conquest—"*magnis aggestis molibus extruxit*, &c. &c. &c.—he raised it, *with dig-*"*ging deep trenches, to make the river run round about it:* and made "high hills, with lofty towers and walls thereon, to overtop the town "and country about it."

No question, therefore, can remain, but that this illustrious Chieftain either repaired or new built the Castle. And that amongst his works was unquestionably the raising an high mount; with the very earth dug out of those trenches in which the river was made to run round the whole: just as we have seen was actually done at Tunbridge Castle.—And therefore we may fairly conclude, that his whole work was finished after the same pattern, and just in the same style.

Nevertheless, it is almost as certain, that a Keep Tower, and Castle of residence of some kind or other, must have existed here, for a considerable period *before* the Conquest. Because both King Alfred,‖ and also Harold Harefoot, are known to have resided long at this place.

And the existence of such more antient Fortress is verified, as Hearne justly observes in his preface,¶ by the very antient and original arms of Oxford; which have a castle represented, with a large ditch and bridge.

This original Castle, thus represented, was in very old writings called by no other name than *Mota*.—And, therefore, there is very good reason to believe, whatever additional ditches D'Oiley might make for perfecting the works, and for conveying the river round the whole;

* Itin. Vol. II. p. 17. + Dugdale Bar. Vol I. p. 459.

‡ Camden—Gough's ed. Vol. I. p. 288.

§ Cronic Wyke, MSS. Bibl. Cotton.

‖ One of Alfred's sons struck money at Oxford. See Troyne Antiq. Ox. p. 184; and Harold Harefoot was crowned at Oxford. Wood H. and Antiq. Ox. p. 43.

¶ Hearne's Preface to his Collection, p. 99.

yet that there must have been a great surrounding ditch, and wall long before; formed by King Offa; who is well known to have raised many great earth works elsewhere; and to have built great edifices of stone, at St. Albans, and other places; and who, we are positively told, *built walls at Oxford;** *where also he fought with the Kentish men.*

By him, therefore, it is most likely a Saxon Castle was originally built here; long before D'Oiley's time.—A Castle, which contained also such a sort of tower as was deemed, in those days, fit for royal residence.

For that both *Offa*, and *Alfred*, and his sons; and *Harold Harefoot*, actually resided in the Castle itself; and not, as some of the Norman kings afterwards did, in any adjoining palace, is most evident; because, in the survey taken just after the Conquest, no mention is made of the remains of any other palace, or place of royal residence at all, that they could possibly have dwelt in, at Oxford; but only seven hundred and fifty houses, and those common houses, within and without the walls are described;† besides twenty-four mansions on the wall.

Considerable Saxon remains have lately been discovered, by digging within the castle area.—And plain common sense alone might easily lead us to conclude, that there must have been in Saxon times some kind of buildings of stone, fit for the purpose of royal residence, *within the walls* of this castle; when it is actually ascertained by antient records, that even *beyond the walls*, a Saxon tower of stone was really standing in the time of King Ethelred; at a distance, far on the outside, on *Grand-pont* bridge;‡ in the very place, where, in subsequent ages, the Norman tower, called Friar Bacon's study, was built.

Let us now then first examine what was the state of the Castle in Norman times, with the addition of Robert D'Oiley's magnificent building: and then consider the traces of the prior Saxon structure.

Mr. Grose, mistaking a drawing which was made by *Ralph Agas;* (as a sort of bird's eye view; in 1538; shewing the Castle, as it then appeared; and which was published first in 1578, and again in

* Hearne's Preface, p. 103; Coll. Edmundi MSS. Vol. LXXXVIII. p. 24.

† Domesday Book, p. 154; Camden, Gough's ed. Vol. I. p. 288.

‡ See Anthony Wood's Account of Oxford published by Sir John Peshall.

1728,) has given us, on an enlarged scale,* a representation and plan of such a sort of Castle as never existed in any age: placing a large Keep Tower, just at the *foot* of an artificial mount.

But having now obtained a more exact copy of this plan of Agas's, by the favour of Lord Harcourt, and the assistance of Mr. Harris; we shall find that this (which is here given, Pl. CXXVIII. F. 1.) agrees most completely, allowing a little for bad, or rather unskilful drawing, with the true idea of the first Norman castles; with the description given in a manuscript account of Anthony Wood, in the Bodleian library; and with the remains of foundations, that have been now so lately discovered.

At one of its entrances, Anthony Wood's account† informs us, was a large bridge; which is directly mentioned in a certain roll‡ containing an account of the sheriffs and keepers of this Castle 16 Edw. I: and this bridge led into a long and broad entry; and so to the chief gate of the Castle; the entry itself being fortified, on each side, with a large embattled wall; and having (according to the description in the manuscript) several passages *above*, from one side to the other; with open spaces between them, through which, in times of storm, whenever any enemy had broken through the first gate of the bridge, and was gotten into the entry, scalding water, or stones, might be cast down, to annoy them.

These open spaces are considered, by Sir John Peshall,§ as having been merely a sort of *machicolations*: but they seem to have been rather large void spaces, left open over head, between the arched passages that went above from side to side; spaces left between a sort of separate flying bridges; in a manner similar to the fortification of the long Norman entry at Portchester.

From a curious fragment in the Itinerarium of William of Worcester,‖ who measured the bridge about A. D. 1434, it appears, that it was forty paces, or about one hundred amd twenty feet in length.

* In his third volume of Antiquities.

† See Anthony Wood's account of Oxford published by Sir John Peshall.

‡ Rot. Mag. 16 Edw. I. in Offi. Pip. the sum of £20. 14*s*. 11*d*. was that year expended in the repair of this bridge.

§ In his account of the City of Oxford from Anthony Wood, p. 203.

‖ Itinerarià Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre, p. 296.

On passing through the gate, at the end of this long entry, the manuscript describes the fortification as stretching itself, on the left hand, in a straight line; till it came to a *round* tower; that was rebuilt in the 19th of Henry III.*

And from thence went a fair embattled wall; guarded for the most part with the mill stream underneath, till it came to the high tower joining to St. George's church; which was used as a campanile, belonging to that church.

And we ought to observe on this occasion, that by a very odd mode of expression in this description, extracted from the manuscript, it should seem as if this tower itself, or at least some building adjoining to it, was formerly made use of as a *royal residence;* for the words are; *from hence went a fair embattled wall,+ guarded for the most part with the mill stream underneath, till it came to the high tower, going under St. George's college, and the king's house employed formerly as a campanile belonging to that church.*

From hence, says the manuscript, the wall went to another gate, now quite down, opposite to the former abovementioned; and leading to *Osney*, over another bridge: *close to which joined that lofty and eminent mount, sometime crowned with an embattled tower;* which (says the writer), I suppose was erected at the first foundation of the place, or at least in the Empress Maud's time; there being mention made of it by the Norman writers, in these words; *est autem Oxenfordia civitas tutissime munita, et inexpugnabili Castello, et turri eminentissima, pulchre et fortissime roborata, &c.*

The manuscript adds, that, for the greater defence of this Castle, there was, on one of the sides of it, *a barbican:* which seems to have been not merely a single tower; but (from the words of an antient deed wherein ‡ it is expressly mentioned) *a place;* or outwork, containing several habitations.

* Rot. Mag. 19 Edw. III. the sum of £144. 5*s*. was expended in the rebuilding.

+ See Sir John Peshall's Anthony Wood's Oxford, p. 203.

‡ Regist. Munim. Coll. Oriel in fine Statut. Coll. ejusdem MSS. p. 33. The substance of the account in the MSS. is; Nich-Ffraunceys de la Barbicane and Maud his wife gave to the hospital of St. Bartholemew all his tenements in the Barbicane, quod jacet in parochia Sti. Thomæ Martyris, inter terram Roberti le Vorn et fossatum castri Ox.

And from an account stating the repairs of this Castle, 11 Hen. III.* it appears further, that there were more barbicans than one.

The ruins of certain other towers of the Castle besides the barbicans, and besides these that have been so particularly described, are said also to have been standing till 1649; when they were at last, being four in number, exclusive of that over the gate, pulled down, to erect new bulwarks for the use of the Parliament's garrison.

This, which is the real substance of the whole manuscript account, compressed in as few words as possible for the sake of clearness and brevity, does surely agree, on the whole, very well with *Agas*'s drawing; except that, in his sketch, the tower, between the gate tower, and St. George's, is represented square, instead of being round: which, however, only shews that his drawing is not to be depended upon in nice particulars; and may therefore the rather lead us to suppose, that in the drawing it was, in fact, intended to represent the great Keep Tower as standing *on the top* of the mount; and not as standing, according to Mr. Grose's idea, by the side of it, and at its foot.

There is also a manifest effort to shew the remaining traces of the disused *Osney gate;* and one of the distant barbicans.—And we may observe, that the other towers, which are now pulled down, exclusive of the Keep, the Osney Gate Tower, and the other Gate Tower, and of St. George's Tower, which last is still standing, appear in the drawing, as well as in the MSS. account, to have been exactly four in number.

Let us now then examine the remains that have so lately been actually brought to light.

In 1794, I had the honour to receive from Lord Harcourt a very curious drawing, with an account of a new discovery made at Oxford Castle, by Mr. Harris who has the custody of it.

An old magazine, (as it has been called of late years) or sort of store cellar, on the top of the Castle Mount, had long been preserved; and is mentioned by Sir John Peshall,+ and by Mr. Grose; but is strangely described by them, as being large:‡ this Mr. Harris had the curiosity

* Rot. Mag. 11 Hen. III.

\+ In his account of the City of Oxford, p. 207.

‡ In Loggan's Map, annexed to his Views of Oxford, published A. D. 1675, some ap-

to examine more minutely; and sent the following short detail of the result of his investigation to Lord Harcourt.

That the Castle Hill, which appeared to be evidently artificial, is situated about fifty yards N E of the Old Tower of St. George; and at the most northern extremity of the site of the Castle: rising in a very steep angle out of the antient ditch, or moat, to the height of about sixty feet above the level of the ground adjacent.

That the top, as it then remained, formed a circle of about forty feet in diameter; represented by the dotted line in the plan, Pl. CXXVI. F. 1. and that, from some fragments of masonry (*a a a*) it appeared to have been, at some time or other, inclosed by a rough stone wall of considerable thickness.

That at (B) is a staircase arched over; descending to a vaulted room (*c c*), entirely under the surface of the hill; being the same that was called the Magazine: but that this vaulted room was in reality no more than twelve feet in diameter, and twelve in height; and was a regular hexagon. That it is very substantially, and handsomely built; the ribs of the arch, the quoins at each angle, and about the door-way, being all wrought in freestone. And that the vaulting, which (from the appearance of the intersecting arches) had generally been deemed pointed, was, in reality semicircular.—And he added, that in digging lately, in the floor of the room, a circular opening, four feet in diameter, had been discovered (at D), walled up after the manner of a well; and filled in with rough stone and rubbish, amongst which were found horses bones, dogs bones, and three or four horse shoes; and, at the depth of about twenty feet, several human skeletons.

This curious room is exactly represented, in Pl. CXXVII. F. 1. from a drawing made by Mr. Harris, which accompanied the account.

Having been informed of these discoveries; and requested, if it were possible, to fling out some hints that might tend to develop the true nature of these remains; it plainly occurred to me, that there

parent remains of the great Keep on the Mount, are obviously represented; but the prejudice, concerning the *magazine*, as it was called, being some *large* place, misled Mr. Grose to suppose that *Agas*'s Tower could not be the very building originally erected on those apparent remaining foundations; and those remains themselves misled other writers, to fancy the magazine itself, to have been *large*; and a very different thing from the little souterrain, or well room; which is now found to be the only vault that ever existed as such repository.

must have been, on this hill, either a very antient circular Keep, about twenty feet in diameter, built after the old Saxon manner; or a larger Norman, multangular Keep: built like those first introduced with William the Conqueror: and that, in either case, this little room, with such a truly antient circular vaulting, was both the well room to supply it with water; and occasionally the dungeon.

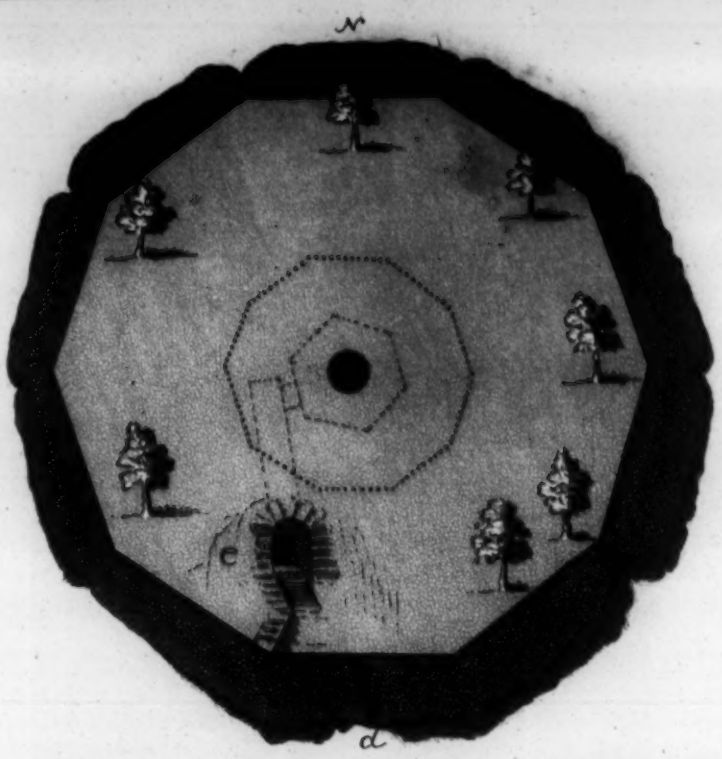
I therefore wished to have walls searched for; at the distance of about ten, or twelve feet from the centre: and also to have the walls, of which some fragments appeared at *a a a*, more fully traced.

And conceiving, that if (as was indeed more probable from the nature of the mount,) there should appear to have been a great Norman multangular Keep on its summit; there must then have been a wall running quite across the whole Castle area, with a covered way upon the top of it, forming a communication with the principal gate, as at Cardiff;—and supposing, from Anthony Wood's account, that this principal gate was that where the long bridge and strong fortifications are said to have been; I requested that search might be made, whether there were not foundations of such a wall to be found; in a straight direction from the mount, to the spot where that gate must have stood.

The result of the whole search was; that, upon farther examination, Mr. Harris found the outward walls, on the top of the mount, whose exterior fragments had appeared at (*a a a*) F. 1. Pl. CXXVI. to form a complete decagon, about fifty-eight feet in diameter; having each of its sides about eighteen feet in length: and the wall being every where between five and six feet in thickness; with the appearance of having been originally thicker: as, from the extreme roughness and inequality of the masonry on the outside, there seemed to have been a facing of squared stones in antient time, which had been taken off for the sake of the materials; and as the quoins at the angles had been visibly taken away.

There were found also, at the distance of about eleven feet from the centre of the top of the mount, and a little below the level of the arch of the small vaulted room that has been just described, the foundations of two walls; three feet in thickness; so situated, and of such dimensions, as to form two of the sides of a decagon, of about twenty-

F. 2.



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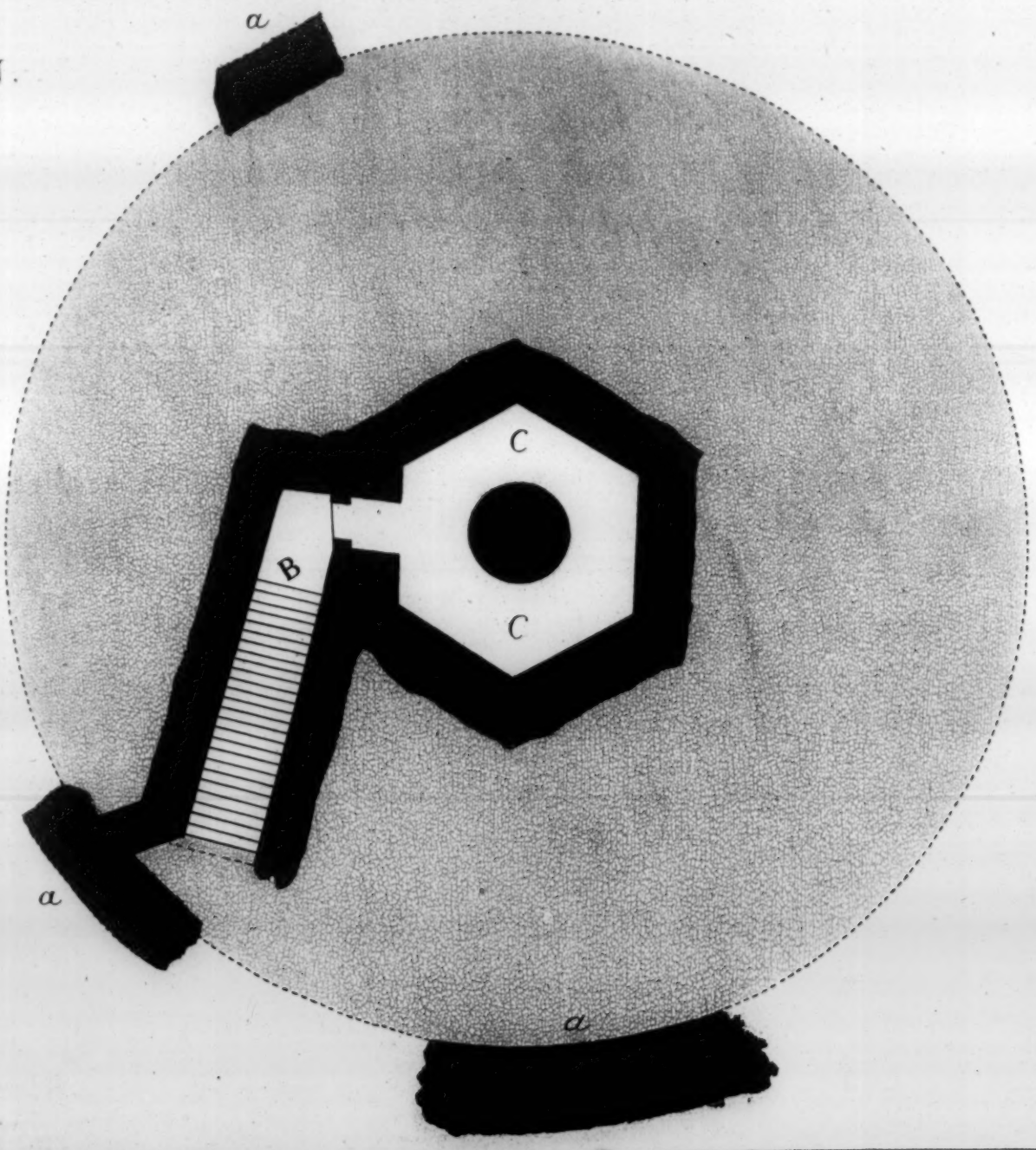


Plans of the Keep, in Oxford Castle.

D. Harris, del.

G. Richardson, & Son, Sculp.

G.R. III.
BRITISH MUSEUM

two feet in diameter; corresponding with the sides of the larger and exterior decagon.—All which appeared very plainly from the exact measure of one of the sides being just seven feet in length; and from farther discoveries of various different parts; although the whole of the foundations of all the other sides could not be come at, without removing a prodigious quantity of rubbish.

The whole plan is represented, Pl. CXXVI. F. 2.—wherein the exterior wall is shewn, just as it now appears: having a passage for a drain clearly remaining in it at (*d*). And the situation of the inner wall is shewn by the dotted lines furthest from the centre. And that of the walls of the well room, by those nearest to the centre: and the proportional dimensions of the well itself are also shewn—whilst at (*e*) appears the entrance of the steps descending to the staircase.

Nothing, therefore, can now be more obvious; considering the small thickness of the walls of the inner decagon; and the great thickness of the walls of the outward decagon; than that here was originally, on the top of the mount, not a small Saxon Tower like any of those described in the preceding pages; but a large Norman Keep Tower, very nearly corresponding with that shewn so awkwardly in Agas's map: and very nearly agreeing with the Keep Towers at Tunbridge, Arundel, and Cardiff.

But as to any wall running in a straight line from the mount, to what Anthony Wood calls the Great gate of the Castle, across the whole Castle area; as formerly at Cardiff; no foundations of any such could be discovered: the ground having long since been dug out to a great depth, for modern buildings; and no appearance of any such foundations having been remembered, by any of the persons employed at the time those buildings were reared.

We must take it for granted, therefore, that none such ever did exist.

On bestowing a little farther attention, however, the whole original consistent plan of this once most distinguished Fortress, in its Norman state, may be brought to light, even without the supposed existence of any such wall.

For though Anthony Wood considers the gate, where he describes the bridge, and strongly fortified entrance; as being the *principal* and

Great gate; yet we find, that in an inquisition taken in the fifth year of the reign of Edward III.* a turret over another gate, the *Osney* gate, (then out of repair, and so cleft and broken from the bottom to the top, that it endangered passengers going underneath) is mentioned as one of the *chief guards* of the Castle. Considering, therefore, still further, that on the road leading from this other gate was built *Osney* priory, by the *second Robert D'Oiley;* which, being a foundation of very considerable distinction,+ is not likely to have been placed merely near a second, and inferior gate of the Castle; we may fairly conclude; that in fact *the Osney Gate*, with its tower over it, (constructed in a manner very similar to that at Arundel, which is shewn in the interior view of that Castle area, Pl. CXXIV.); was indeed originally the *principal gate* of the Castle. And that it, instead of the other gate, had, like that at Arundel, an immediate communication with the Great Keep Tower on the mount; by means of a similar covered way on the wall; and by means of a great flight of steps, well guarded, and secured; which had an entrance up to them, on the side of the Tower.—And that the gate, mentioned by A. Wood; became the principal one, in subsequent ages; only in consequence of the decay, and neglect of this, on account of its great antiquity.

In this case, therefore, the plan of the Castle, as it existed in the first Norman ages, must be concluded to have been indeed very nearly such as is represented by Ralph Agas: only placing a tower, (somewhat like that over the great gate of entrance at Arundel, over the Osney Gate; and a fortified bridge, before it; of the same kind nearly

* In Turr. Lond. Inq. Ed. III. No. 80.

+ So distinguished in point of attention was Osney Abbey; that, by the munificence of its donors, and by their distinguished liberality, and endeavours to promote arts, even its bells became the finest ring in England. And, that celebrated one, the great Tom of Christ-Church, was in reality brought from thence.‡

The last abbot, Robert King, was first made Bishop of Osney; and afterwards the first Bishop of Christ-Church (or rather of Oxford.) Which was surely another proof how high in estimation, this foundation and its abbot stood, even to the last; and in the midst of the general dissolution of perverted institutions. His portrait is still preserved, painted in glass, nearly as large as life, in one of the windows in the Cathedral of Christ-Church.

‡ Gough's Camden, Vol. I. p. 301.

as that before the other gate: and placing the Keep Tower on the top of the mount: and making the tower that is between the other gate and St. George's Tower, a round one.

The Inquisition,* mentioning the great crack and decay in the tower over the Osney gate; mentions also the decay of an old hall; of a kitchen, and two chambers, with a wardrobe adjoining; (which are said expressly to have been for the use of the *Custos*+ of the castle) and of a bakehouse; a brewhouse; and a stable; (besides the small church of St. George).

We must therefore further conclude, that here, at Oxford, as at Tunbridge, in the area of the castle, were several additional buildings erected in successive ages. A well also is mentioned, as having been made in the 20th of Henry Second, at the expence of £19. 19*s*. according to the king's brief;‡ and such a well has actually been lately discovered, and opened again, in a place which was near the middle of the antient castle area; and it is now in use near the modern inner gate, and about twenty-two feet in depth.

The other original well, for water, which appeared from Mr. Harris's first discovery, to have existed in the centre of the Keep Tower, on the mount; has now also been quite cleared out; and a very fine spring of water has been found at its bottom, most remarkably cold; to the surface of which, the whole depth is fifty-four feet, from the floor of the well room: and therefore about seventy feet from the top of the mount.

It has already been mentioned, that amongst the rubbish, with which this well was filled up, were found horses bones, dogs bones, and some horse shoes; and, at the depth of about twenty feet, several human skeletons. The appearance of these latter it is very difficult to account for: unless they were the bodies of malefactors, who had been executed on the gallows placed near the Castle, in latter ages, that might have

* In Turr. Lond. Inq. Ed. III. No. 80.

+ This *Custos* however seems not to have been the Keeper of the Castle; but only a President or guardian of the students and scholars, belonging to St. George's Church, and maintained out of the revenues of Osney Abbey. For we even find, elsewhere, that he was always to be one of the Canons of Osney.

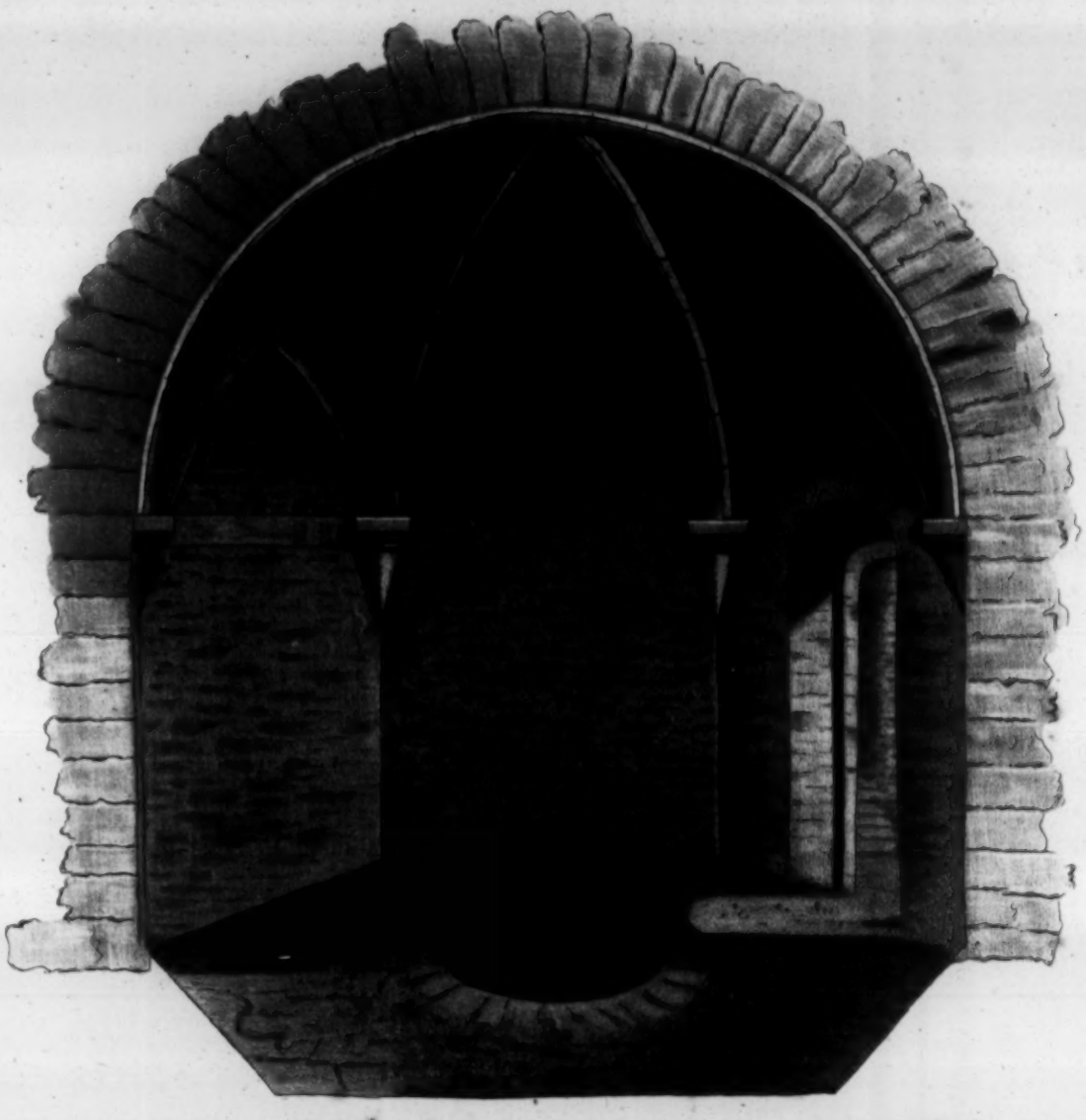
‡ See Sir John Peshall's Account, p. 205.

been flung in here; instead of being buried under the gallows, according to the mode, that was oftentimes practised.

Besides all these, there were found also, still lower down, several round balls of stone; from six to nine inches in diameter; and from twelve pounds, to thirty-six pounds in weight; such as manifestly must have been intended, in very antient times, to have been used for military purposes; and to have been flung out of catapultas. There were found also in this well a great many large flat stones; having one side a little concave, and the other a little convex; and plainly so cut as to have formed originally a low circular wall, (or sort of curb,) round the mouth of the well: and besides these were found others much larger, either whole, or in pieces; all wrought of freestone, and some of them chamfered on one edge: and of the size and form shewn, Pl. CXXIX. F. 1.—They appear, like the former, to have composed a circle;—but, from their dimensions, that circle could not be placed on *the mouth* of the wall of the well at the top; because its circumference would have so much filled up the area of the little room. We must, therefore, conclude that they formed a part of the floor, or pavement. And as one of them has a very remarkable hole in it, clearly designed for iron work; the odd situation of which is shewn at (*s*); it obviously leads to a suspicion, (as the inner section of the concave circular part corresponds exactly with the dimensions of the mouth of the well,) that the stone itself was originally made fast, as a part of the floor, by being placed, with the concave extremity under the surrounding wall, or curb of the well; and by being fixed to adjoining stones, by the chamfering of the edge: and that the hole served to secure an iron staple, to hold a chain; when this well room might occasionally be made use of as a dungeon, for confining prisoners.

As to the original state, and designation of the great Keep Tower to which this well belonged: there can be no doubt, but that the angular area, twenty-two feet in diameter, was always left open, as a little court, in the centre, to give air and light: and that from hence to the outward walls of the great decagon were constructed floors of rooms all round. Those in the lower stories lighted only from this little inward court; and none lighted from without, except the state apartments at

F. 1.



F. 2.

Well Room, & Crypt, in Oxford Castle.

D. Harris, del.

G. Richardson, & Son, Sculp.

the top; where were undoubtedly great open windows, commanding a fine view of the country all around.

There was manifestly a covered way originally, on the wall, leading from the round Tower, built in Henry the Third's time, to St. George's Tower; and therefore probably there was another covered way, from thence to the Osney gate; and had been one in like manner, upon the wall, from the other gate to Henry the Third's tower.

Such appears to have been the Norman castle.

And so early as the reign of Henry the Third, permission was given, in the first place to the Chancellor of the university, to imprison his rebellious clerks in the castle: * and then, + by Act of Parliament, it was appointed the common gaol for the county. But we may be well assured, that neither by the first grant, nor by the subsequent statute, was any thing more meant; than that here, as at Norwich Castle, and at many other castles, some one apartment should be allotted, as a legal prison. And it is most likely, that the identical curious well room, which we have been examining, was sometimes used for that very purpose: although, in succeeding ages, even the Tower of St. George's Church has been made the prison.

Notice has been taken of two chambers, and a wardrobe; over the kitchen; which were appointed for the use of the *Custos* of the castle. An officer who plainly appears not to have been any Keeper, or Constable of the castle itself; for any such person unquestionably must have had *his* residence in the great Keep Tower on the mount: but some monk of Osney; who, in consequence of the removal of the secular canons from the church of St. George, about fifty years after they had been settled there, by Robert D'Oiley, was expressly appointed, by the name of *Custos*, to reside within the castle; and to preside there over certain scholars, who were to be maintained within the castle, by the abbot and monks of *Osney* Abbey; to whom the lands, belonging to St. George's Church, had been given, with the consent of Archbishop Theobald. ‡

* Granted 15 H. III.——ad clericos suos rebelles imprisonandos. See Hare ex Rot. Claus. 15.

+ 23 H. III.——and see Twyne, 8. 211.

‡ Reg. Osn. MSS. fol. 1; and see also Sir John Peshall's Anthony Wood, p. 209.

Now let us examine what traces remain of the prior Saxon castle.

It is very remarkable; that the Tower still remaining, and called St. George's Tower, is always described as having been used by way of a *campanile*, to hang bells in, from the time that St. George's Chapel was used for a parish church: and therefore it must have been a campanile long before the time of King Stephen; since this parish church, even ceased to be used as such, in that reign.* Yet we find (as has already been observed,) that it is oddly mentioned by Anthony Wood, as having been also used *as the King's House, or Lodging*.

Subsequent to the time of King Stephen it could not well be so used; because we find it always mentioned, as being either connected with the church, and a part of it, or else as being a prison. We must, therefore, suppose that *this appellation* was derived from some *prior* usage: and that could not well be in any age between King Stephen's time and the Conquest, after Robert D'Oiley had once built a great Keep Tower, so much more magnificent.—It must surely, therefore, have derived this appellation from *Saxon* times; and must indeed have been a Tower existing in the castle, before ever the castle was given, by the Conqueror, to Robert D'Oiley; and must by Robert D'Oiley have been first applied to the purpose of becoming a campanile for the church, and house of secular canons, which he founded there; when his great new Keep Tower rendered this useless as a royal residence.

The structure itself, when minutely examined, confirms all these ideas.

For, like truly old *Saxon* towers, its dimensions are small.—Like them, the apartment on the ground floor has no communication with those above. Its door beneath has a Saxon arch. And the modern square prison windows, appear to have been inserted in places where were either loop-holes, or Saxon windows. And what is still more deserving of notice; at the top, (instead of being finished as a mere campanile would have been.) This tower has, in a manner very much like those old Saxon castles, at Castleton, at Portchester, and at Bamborough, the apparent remains of two remarkable arched windows, one on the side nearest to the north, and one on that nearest

* Sir John Peshall's Anthony Wood, p. 209.

to the south; that yet were not in any apartment; but were merely belonging to the platform over the original roof: the carrying up the wall so much higher, by means of having these windows, serving as a better defence than a mere parapet with battlements.

The manner in which the roofs of the antient Saxon towers at Castleton, Portchester, and Bamborough, were fortified; and the roofs placed far lower than the summits of the towers themselves; has been explained in the former part of this work. This at Oxford is somewhat different; but manifestly of the same sort of device. It has indeed of late years been built up in various manners; at different periods: but the traces of the first original roof are still visible; and have plainly been discovered by Mr. Harris. This roof was placed at (*a b*), as shewn in the sketch, Pl. CXXIX. F. 2; which represents a section of what may be called the north inside of the tower; and it was at least thirteen feet lower than the present top of the wall: and was exactly of the form here shewn.—Just above the middle, and highest part of the roof, is a Saxon arch (*c*), about six feet high, and four feet wide; that was manifestly originally quite open; but has the appearance of having now been walled up for many ages; the masonry with which it is filled, being of no modern date.—And on each side of it are two oylets, (or loops for shooting arrows), built in wrought masonry, within arched recesses very similar to the middle opening; only these arched recesses slope on the sides inwards, or splay inwards; from the breadth of fifteen inches, to that of four feet six inches; whereas the sides of the centre arch are straight. The plan of all three is shewn, Pl. CXXIX. F. 3.

Nothing, therefore, can be more evident; than that (*a b*) never was the floor of a room: its form being so rising in the middle, and there being an open gutter so clearly designed on each side. And it is, at the same time, as manifest, that the arched recesses, and oylets, (*e* and *d*) were intended for the secure standing of archers; whilst the great open arch (*c*) was intended for the more easy discharge of weapons, from catapultas, and balistas, or other great engines of war.

The marks of one of the later roofs, of an high pitched triangular form, are still visible on the wall; as shewn by the dotted line. But the manner in which it interferes with, and intercepts all the three

arches, shews that it must have been placed there after the centre arch was walled up.

There were just the same sort of arches, on that which may be called the south side of the tower: but only two loop-holes, on each of the other sides, which may be called east and west: and no such large arched openings in the middle between them.

The walls of the tower, all round, have every appearance of having been once carried up even higher than the thirteen feet. And it deserves notice, that the dimensions of this area at the top of the tower, are greater than those of the ground floor; being twenty-two feet square; whilst the walls, which are here not more than four feet thick, measure only thirty feet square on the outside; whence it comes to pass, notwithstanding the larger area at top, that the whole tower has a taper appearance.

A more strongly apparent specimen of very old Saxon fortification, entirely different from the usual mode of finishing the summits of Norman towers, cannot well be met with.

The principal entrance also of this tower, which was into the first story above, has a great singularity, that points out a Saxon origin:— for though it seems, in the time of Robert D'Oiley, to have communicated immediately with a covered way upon the top of the castle wall; by means of a short flight of steps up to the door; yet, upon examination, it appears by marks, and traces, on the outside of the wall of the tower; that originally, before St. George's church was built, a flight of stone steps, descended, from this door of entrance on this first story above, quite down to the ground; almost exactly in the manner of some of the other early Saxon towers that have been described in preceding pages: and we find, besides this, that even the top part of the flight of steps, which did lead unto the wall in Robert D'Oiley's time, stand quite askew, with respect to the wall: as shewn at (*s*) in the plan, Pl. CXXVIII. F. 2.; and not as if they were built originally with the wall; and for that purpose.

Over these steps, is a sort of strong buttress; quite solid in the lower story beneath; and through which, on the first floor, was the entrance, as is represented, Pl. CXXX. F. 4.

And all these foundations for suspicion of this having been origi-

nally a Saxon tower, whose walls still remain firm, as in several other instances, whilst subsequent Norman buildings are crumbled away and lost, is greatly confirmed, by a further discovery made by Mr. Harris, of a most curious little Saxon crypt; at the distance of about seventy feet from the tower. It was no more than twenty feet long, including the semicircular part, at the east end: and twenty feet wide: supported by four pillars; which appear to be decidedly Saxon; and of an age even prior to that of Grimbald:—having a sort of odd disproportion, and neatness of work, almost peculiar to the earlier Saxon ages, about the year 700. And having also, as a part of the ornaments of the capitals, heads carved, on the sides, with what seem manifestly designed to represent *Saxon crowns,* upon them.

This crypt therefore; from its small dimensions, shews itself clearly to have been a crypt under an original Saxon chapel, of no larger dimensions. Whilst the church of St. George, erected afterwards, plainly appears in this instance, just as in that of *St. Peter*'s at Oxford, (where Grimbald's small crypt is still found,) to have been of much larger dimensions, and to have had no vault under it: but had a vast number of human skeletons found buried there: and many fragments of pavement, of different coloured tiles; with armorial bearings, that plainly proved its later, and truly *Norman* foundation.

The Saxon small curious crypt, is represented, from an exact drawing made by Mr. Harris, just as it appeared when first examined, Pl. CXXVII. F. 2.

The diameter of the shaft of each column, is one foot eleven inches, or near two feet: whilst the height is only two feet seven inches: but the height of each capital is one foot three inches: and the intercolumniation, or space between each pillar, each way, is five feet.

The whole height, from the ground, to the springing of the arch, is about five feet: and the arch itself rises two feet six inches: and the rib six inches more: so that the exact height, from the floor, to the underside of the rough arch of the stone vaulting, was exactly eight feet. The ribs of the arches, and the whole of the pillars were wrought in freestone. And the rough groins were turned with a mixture of rough stone, and very hard burnt bricks, or rather tiles; nine inches square, and two inches thick; which manifestly shew a Saxon construction.

And there were many such odd bricks in the walls; and others of still more strange and different dimensions; just as in other most antient Saxon buildings.

This very precise account I have here the rather given; because, in order to carry on the foundations of the great new buildings of Oxford Goal, Mr. Harris was unavoidably obliged to disturb the whole. He has, however, replaced the pillars in a modern cellar, as near the spot as possible; and, as far as might be, in the same relative situation. Only, in consequence of the foundations of a new round tower adjoining, the east end of the present little crypt is now made *convex inwards*, instead of being *concave*, as the original one was. And each pillar stands about one foot and an half removed from its pristine situation.

The plan, Pl. CXXVIII. F. 2. will explain the relative situation of all these Saxon remains, as they originally stood; and also their dimensions.

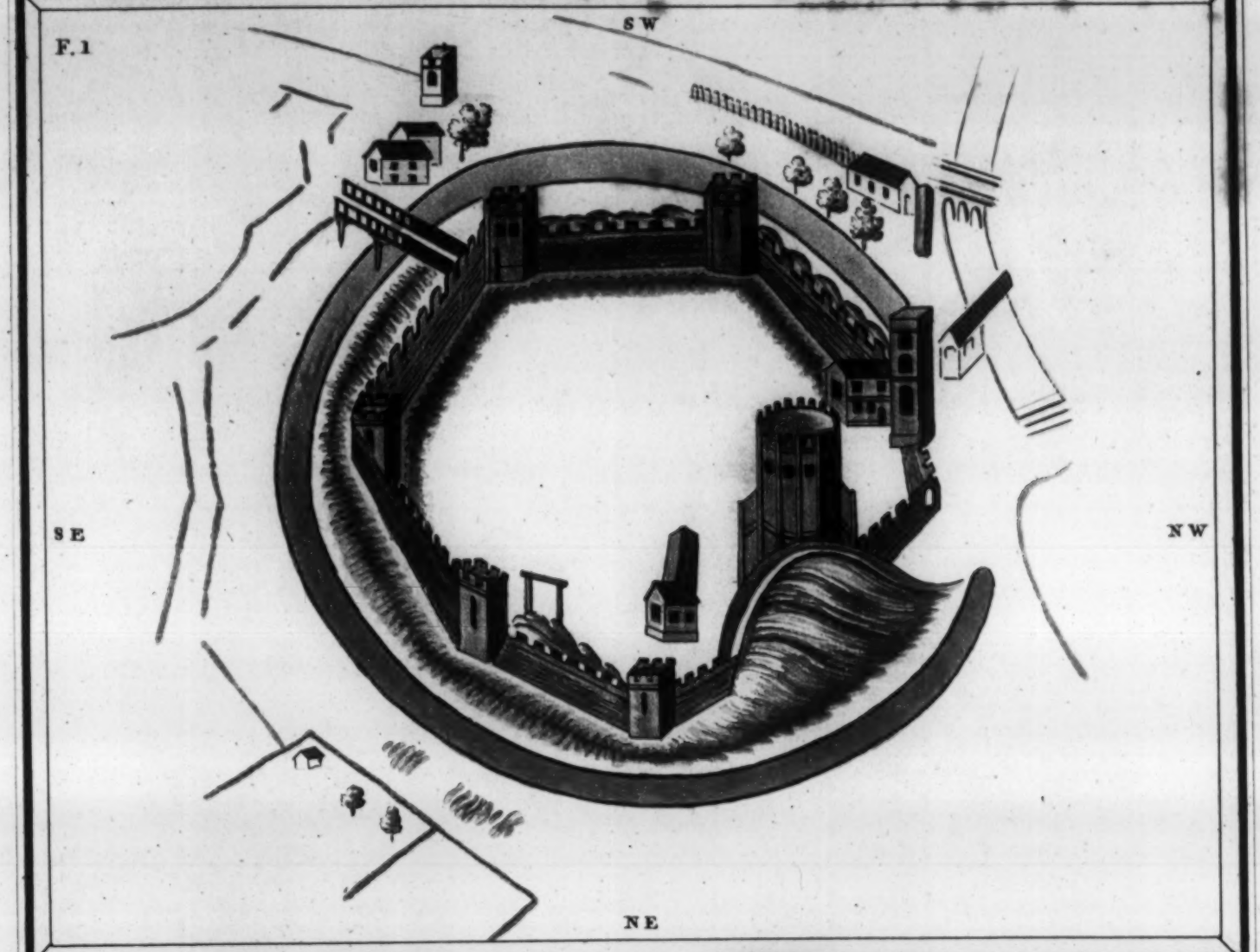
(*a*) Shews the lower floor of the old tower we have been describing: whose walls are at least nine feet thick; whilst the apartment within is only about nineteen feet by sixteen. And this apartment had a Saxon door-way at (*b*) now walled up in part; but had no sort of communication with the rooms above. To them the only entrance was by a flight of steps at (*s*), that in Norman times ascended from a covered way, or walk, on the top of the wall (*c c*). A mode of entrance which, (as well as the great thickness of the walls, and the want of communication with the room beneath) plainly shews, that this tower could never have been designed for a mere campanile to a church, when it was first built.

The wall (*c c*), is that which extended to the round tower, said to have been built during the reign of Henry the Third, between St. George's Tower and the first gate. And behind both it, and this tower were the castle mills, and mill stream,—and from the corner opposite to (*s*) went another wall, to the *Osney* Gate.

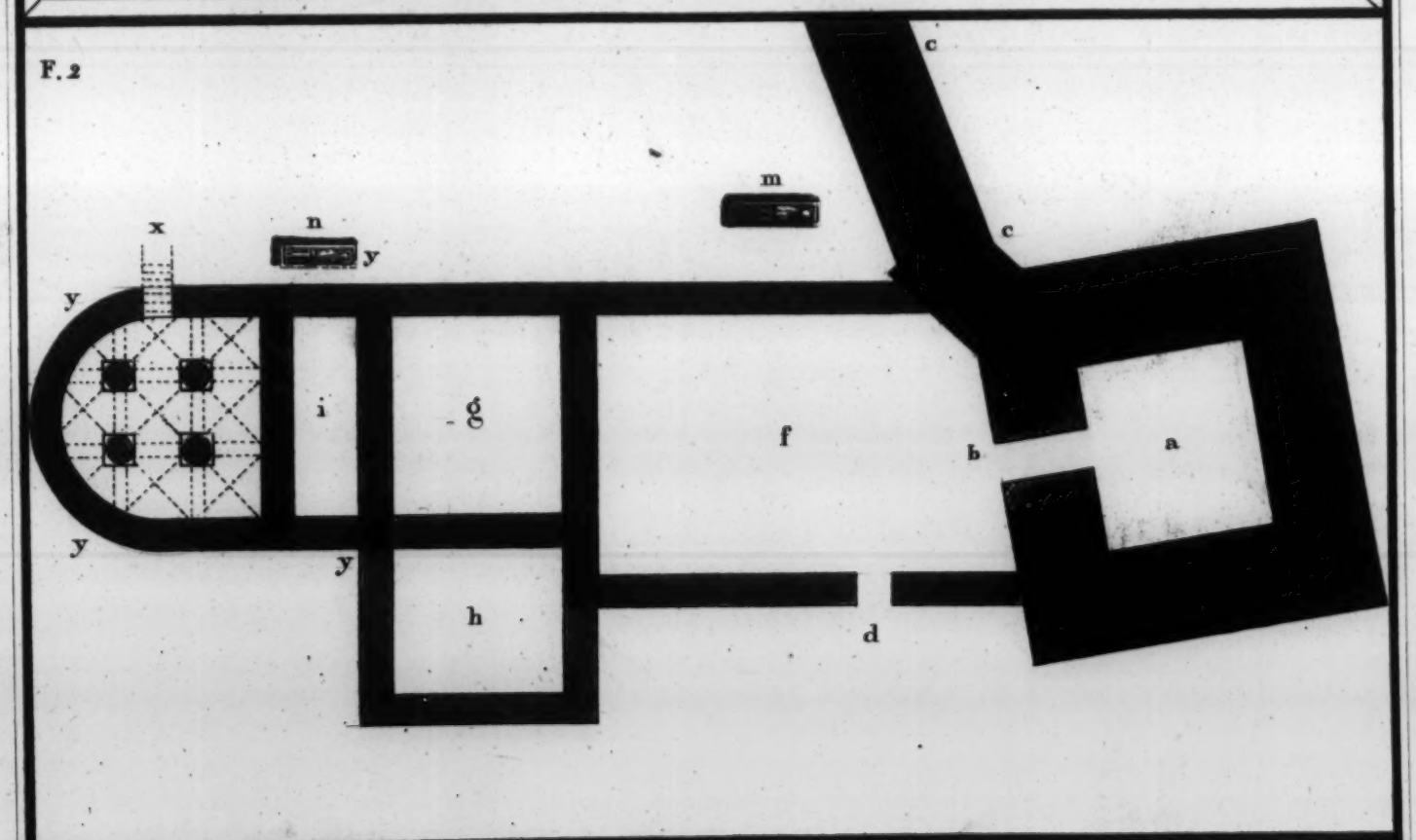
At (f) was the old St. George's Church, in Norman times; as is very evident, from the vast number of human skeletons buried there, and laying due east and west; and from the many fragments of pavement, of tiles of different colours, with armorial bearings, found there.

But that it was an edifice subsequent in its date to the tower (*a*); and

F.1



F.2



Ralph Agas's View of Oxford Castle:— and a Plan of S.t Georges Tower.

D. Harris Del. *J.C. Stadler Sculp.*

GEORGIUS III
BRITISH MUSEUM

by no means cœval with that tower ; appears evidently from its being placed so much aslant from that building : for had they both been built by Robert D'Oiley, and had the tower been originally designed for a campanile, they would most unquestionably have been placed quite even with each other ; as is the case in all other Norman churches.

The remaining walls of this church have an old door-way with a circular arch placed at (*d*) ; facing very nearly towards the situation of the Osney Gate of the castle : as might well be expected ; when it is remembered, that the monks of Osney were, by Frankalmoign tenure,* to perform divine service in this building.

At (*g*) and (*h*) are apartments, which seem to have been lodgings used for the poor Osney scholars, who were to be maintained within the castle.+ But these, as well as that at (f), and the tower (*a*), have long been used as a part of the gaol.

Under (*h*) is a cellar.

Over (*y y y y*) was built in latter ages a more modern chapel, for the use of the castle. The door of which was exactly behind the stone coffin at (*n*) ; that was found in that spot ; as was also another at (*m*).

And at (*x*) was the entrance to the small *Saxon* crypt, not agreeing in its dimensions either with the more modern chapel above (*y y y y*); or with St. George's church. Its plan, with its four pillars, is exactly represented as it was first discovered. Twenty feet in breadth; and twenty feet in length, including the semicircular part.

The building (f) was undoubtedly Norman ; of the time of Robert D'Oiley : and the buildings (*g h i*) seem to have been more modern still ; as well as the chapel over the crypt.—But the crypt itself appears to have been most truly Saxon : and manifestly indicates the small dimensions of an original Saxon chapel, that was formerly built over it : long before the Norman age.—And the tower (*a*) also seems to have been as truly Saxon.

* We have here one of the most curious, and plainest instances of Frankalmoign tenure, according to Littleton's exact description of it.——An abbot, and convent, held lands, on condition of making orisons, and prayers, and of performing masses, in the church in the castle.—See Coke Littleton, fol. 94, 95.

+ Sir John Peshall's A. Wood, p. 209, 210.

Putting all these circumstances together, therefore, we may very fairly conclude, that the wall (*c c*) was only a Norman structure; and that, before the time of Robert D'Oiley, when the antient ditch, and mounds, and walls, reared by Offa, existed; and caused this fortress to be called the Moat;—The edifice (*a*) was the original Saxon Keep Tower; the place of Royal Residence: and another small structure over the crypt (*x*), the adjacent, appendant, early Saxon Chapel.

Pl. cxxx. F. 1. represents the present external appearance of this tower, with the alterations made in its walls, by the insertion of modern square prison windows.

It is here shewn, as seen from the present inner court of the castle: and the place of the steps of ascent, from the wall to apartments above, is shewn just as it still remains; with the buttress turret over the entrance.

And it may justly be remarked, that the very odd situation of these steps, placed so askew with respect to the wall (*c c*); (which circumstance is still more plainly pointed out in the plan;) is surely a strong indication, that the wall (*c c*), and the tower itself, could never have been built at one and the same time.

The loop-holes, at the top of the tower, are here seen with their ornamental arches on the outside. And the place of the old arched opening, that has been mentioned so particularly, is represented above, on the same side where the steps are. Beneath, at the bottom, also is shewn the old Saxon door-way, which was the entrance to the ground-floor of the tower; but which is now filled up in part.

And the arched door-way of St. George's church, now remaining, in a fragment of its wall, and corresponding with its situation in the plan, is also shewn at a little distance from the tower, on one side of the foreground.

There are seen too arches, and breaches in the outward wall of the tower, on one side of the Saxon door-way, between it and the steps, which seem, as well as other circumstances that have been mentioned, to indicate, that the addition of St. George's church, (the marks of whose roof are here shewn in the wall) was made long, very long after the tower itself was built.

What still further confirms all these ideas, concerning this tower,

and the crypt so near adjoining, having been Saxon structures, is, that in digging, in the year 1794, for gravel, near the entrance of the castle, there was found a capital, of such singular workmanship, as can by no means well be deemed Norman; but must surely have been about that age, when the curious capitals, in the old Saxon cathedral at Christ Church, were formed; as it indicates, like them, a curious mixture of Saxon ideas, and of something better.

It is represented, Pl. cxxx. F. 2. Its height is fourteen inches: and it may very probably have been one of the capitals belonging to the small antient Saxon Chapel, that stood over the crypt that has been described.

Another small ruder Saxon capital, only nine inches in height, has also been dug up; which is represented, F. 3. and a corresponding base, found with it, is shewn, F. 4.

And, for further illustration; one of the pillars of the crypt is represented, F. 5. in all its most clumsy proportions, on a larger scale.

Its diameter two feet. The height of its shaft, only two feet seven inches. The height of its capital, one foot three inches. The height of its architrave, six inches. And the height of its base, one foot. Making the whole exact height five feet four inches.

And we may here add, that there is such a sort of inequality of workmanship in all these columns, that there are hardly two of them exactly alike in the finishing.

If there was ever any other Saxon Keep Tower than this which has been described, now called St. George's Tower; it was probably a small round one; on a small low mount. But I cannot forbear being fully persuaded, that there was really no other.

It only remains to be added; that in digging a little beyond the modern entrance of the castle, there were discovered foundations of a round tower; which seems to have been one of the *barbicans;* much resembling those which we have described at Tunbridge.

In a manuscript* in the Bodleian library; describing the unsettled and disorderly state of the kingdom, soon after the conquest; when Aldellelmus, or Aldhelm, was made abbot of Abingdon; and when he

* Regist. et Histor. Cænob. Abingdon MSS. fol. 120.

was forced to have a guard of armed men to attend him, wherever he went; it is mentioned, that *Wallingford* Castle, in Berkshire, was built at the same time that Oxford Castle was reared by Robert D'Oiley.—And on examining the remains at *Wallingford*, it does indeed seem originally to have been exactly upon the same plan: as might very well be expected; since *Robert D'Oiley* had just married the daughter and heiress of *Wigod*, the old English chieftain who built it.

The rude remains still visible, shew the affinity to this very hour. —A mount, still more conspicuous than that at Oxford; on which a great Keep Tower of a similar construction with D'Oiley's undoubtedly stood: and a large surrounding area; formerly defended by walls, and ditches, and the assistance of streams from the adjacent river carried round the whole, as at Oxford, and Tunbridge.

King Stephen found it impregnable.* And Camden says, that, even in his time, the size, and magnificence of it used to strike him with astonishment, when he came thither from Oxford: and he remembered to have seen, in a part of the high ascent to the Keep Tower, which was by steps on the side of the Mount, a well of immense depth.

Another circumstance is recorded by Camden;+ that is connected with the Castle at Oxford; and well deserves notice, because of its elucidation of the state of literature in the early Norman period.

When the second Robert D'Oiley, in the time of Henry the Fifth, built the abbey at *Osney*, for monks and regulars; (who, in that age, were deemed more learned, and sincere, than the secular clergy; and therefore easily supplanted them in the good opinion of well meaning people; as the friars afterwards, in the reign of Henry the Fifth, on the very same account, supplanted the monks;) and when Robert D'Oiley, to encourage these Regulars, gave them the revenues, and the superintendance of the church of St. George, in the Castle; it is said, in the chronicle of that very abbey, that *there* "Robert Pulen "*began* to read at Oxford, the Holy Scriptures, *which had fallen into* "*neglect in England*. And after both the church of England, and that "of France had profited greatly by his doctrine, he was called away "by Pope Lucius II. who made him Chancellor of the holy Roman

* Camden, Gough's ed. Vol. I. p. 118. + Ibid. p. 288.

"church." This short effort; to which the Pope's preferment put a stop;* seems to have been the true origin of the divinity lecture, and of the divinity schools at Oxford: and indeed also of the studies in the *Sorbonne* at Paris; which was afterwards regularly founded by St. Louis in the year 1250.†

In how low a state, in other respects, all science in general was, and religious knowledge in particular, in this dark age, appears from the well known tale, of the original foundation of Osney Abbey: when a pious canon of St. Fridiswide's nunnery, persuaded Edith, the wife of the second Robert D'Oiley, to build a religious structure on that spot; because she had been surprised at some poor chattering pies, in certain trees there; who commonly made a great noise at her, when she walked out of the Castle that way.‡ These pies, the good canon told her, were not mere birds; but poor souls, in purgatory, begging succour, and relief; and who knew her to be pitiful.—An odd mixture of the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and of the popish doctrine of purgatory.—But it did very well in that age; and procured a well endowed foundation of religious, to

* There were some other extraordinary efforts of science, in this dark age; which by other means were equally soon quenched, and stopped.—It not being as *yet* possible for truth to emerge, and to prevail over inveterate prejudice, and error.

Phillipe de Than, or Thane, a Norman poet, in the reigns of Henry the First, and Stephen, attempted to sketch some dawning outlines of natural history; and to lead men both to the study of it, and of chronology.—But he was checked by the *Benedictines;* who depreciated his works—and it was almost entirely in vain that he wrote a Treatise upon Birds, and Beasts; entitled *Bestiarus*;—and another upon Practical Chronology, in French verse; in both which he honestly sought the instruction of mankind; and to lead them to consider the works, and ways of God.

With as little effect also did *Samson de Nanteuil*, in the same age, translate the Proverbs of Solomon into French verse; and by comparing passages in them, and citing Virgil, Horace, Cicero, and Juvenal, endeavour to lead his contemporaries to the admiration of sound morality, and to some cultivation of polite literature.

Of both these writers a very curious account was given, in a dissertation on the Anglo-Norman poets of the twelfth century, which was read to the Society of Antiquaries, March 3, 1796.

† Henault, Vol. I. p. 233.

‡ See Leland's Itin. Vol. II. p. 19; Dugdale's Baron. Vol. I. p. 461; Dugdale's Monasticon, Vol. II. p. 136; and MSS. An. Wood in Oxon Cod. 8491.

pray both for those supposed poor souls; and for those of her ancestors, and relations; as well as for her own, in time of need.

The tale of the chastisement of the first Robert D'Oiley in a dream; for having annexed a meadow to the Castle unjustly, which belonged to the monks of *Abendon;** is another illustration of the odd state of religion. And whatever chastisement this powerful Earl might undergo in his sleep; he certainly was made to smart a little for his conduct, when he was awake; by the credit given to this idle story:—being, notwithstanding his greatness, and his having the command of the whole country, compelled not barely to do justice, for the wrong he had done: but to make abundant recompence, by increasing both the power and the revenues of the monastery.

The same Robert D'Oiley the second, who succeeded his uncle the first Robert; and who founded the monastery at Osney; taking part against King Stephen, delivered up his castle at Oxford to the Empress Maud for her residence; upon her coming thither, A. D. 1141, in *great state*,+ from Winchester, with many barons; who had promised to protect her, during the Earl of Gloucester's absence in France:‡—to which country he was gone, at their request, in order to bring over Prince Henry.—The Earl of Gloucester had been very lately released from his imprisonment in Rochester Castle, § in exchange for King Stephen, who had been imprisoned in Bristol Castle. ‖ And Stephen, during this absence of the Earl, recovering from a severe fit of sickness, which had at first ensued, marched rapidly, and unexpectedly, to Oxford.—Where, having gotten into the city by surprise; and having set fire to it; he proceeded to shut up the Empress, by a most close siege, in the Castle, ¶ from Michaelmas to Christmas; attempting, as he could not take the Castle by force, to compel them, by want of provisions, to surrender.

He shut up every avenue by great works; he raised two mounts at least, over against the Keep: one since called *Mount Pelham;* and

* Dugdale's Bar. Vol. I. p. 459. + Ibid. p. 460.
‡ Holinshed, Vol. III. p. 55. Chron. Gervas, 1358.
§ J. Brompton Col. 1032.
‖ Gesta Regis Stephani, p. 952; and R. Hoveden, p. 278—280.
¶ Willielm Malmesb.—Scriptores post Bedam. p. 194. Hen. Huntindon, p. 393.

the other called *Jews Mount;* (from its having in later ages been the place of the burning of some Jews, during the days of persecution *): and from hence, we are told, he battered the castle incessantly, with all the machines of war then in use. And very probably with some of those very stone balls, that have so lately been found in the well.

Maud, who had been accustomed to all sorts of stratagems; and was never at a loss for resources, and expedients; who had before this adventure escaped from Winchester Castle on a swift horse, taking advantage of a pretended truce, allowed for the sake of performing the religious ceremonies of the festival of the Holy Cross; and on another occasion had escaped from the Castle of the Devizes; by being conveyed through the whole country then in the possession of King Stephen, as a dead corps, in a funeral herse, or bier; now assumed at Oxford, an invisible shape. For being clad in bright white raiment, as well as three knights her attendants; and the river being frozen; and the country all covered with snow; she boldly rushed out of Oxford Castle in the middle of the night; walked over the ice;+ and, escaping the eyes of the besiegers, by means of the brightness of her garments, got first to Abingdon; and then safe to Wallingford Castle. ‡—Nor ought it to be forgotten; that, when besieged by King Stephen in Arundel Castle, she had as effectually blinded his eyes: and made her escape; by causing him to be deluded, and persuaded, by her spies, that the castle she was then in was utterly impregnable.§

During the quarter of the year that the Empress Maud was thus besieged in Oxford Castle; it is described, as having been principally defended by *two* exceeding strong towers.—And those *two* were most undoubtedly, the great Keep Tower on the high Mount, built by Robert D'Oiley; and St. George's Tower; which there is so much reason to believe was the prior Saxon palace; and whose walls we have seen were near ten feet thick; whilst its summit had the most truly antient

* See the reasons for this conclusion, in a curious note, in Sir John Peshall's Anthony Wood, p. 204.

+ Henry Huntindon—Scriptores post Bedam, p. 393; see also Roger de Hoveden, item p. 488.

‡ Almost all the antient historians, as well as Lord Lyttleton, in these later days, agree in suggesting, that there was some degree of treachery in Stephen's soldiers, joined with the artifice of the white raiment.

§ Holinshed, Vol. III. p. 51.

mode of protection, for those who should be placed there, to annoy the besiegers. On all which accounts it seems manifestly to have been, that these *two* Towers were so particularly distinguished, beyond the rest.

Lord Lyttleton, * on the authority of a contemporary writer, + describes Oxford Castle, as being at that time surrounded with many waters; so as to be thought inaccessible. And he adds, that *the Castle, and Tower which covered one side of it, were counted impregnable.*—No words hardly could more exactly describe the precise situation of the Keep Tower on the Mount, which was properly *the Castle;* and of St. George's Tower standing by the side of it.

During the siege of the Empress by Stephen, (the townsmen and students of Oxford, not having access to the church of St. George, within the Castle, as usual;) the church of St. Thomas was built ‡ for their convenience; as a proper place for performing divine service.

And during this siege also, *that* which is called the palace of *Beaumont,* in Oxford, seems to have received its final designation for becoming *such:* and the construction of it, as a place of royal residence, for King Stephen, was carried on with great alacrity; whether it really had, or had not, been previously begun, for pleasure, by Henry the First, as Ross, and Anthony Wood suppose; § concerning which origin, after all that has ever been said, there is much just doubt. The only thing certain is, that it was not finished as a palace, till the reign of Henry the Second: but being then once become an established, and more convenient seat of Royal residence, than the cloud-capp'd tower, on the high mount; or than the narrow Saxon tower; it is no wonder that Oxford Castle, so deserted by internal royal splendour, fell into decay sooner than most other castles: and is therefore mentioned in the Rolls, ‖ as being in a most dilapidated state, even so early as the reign of Edward the Third.

Having put together all these facts, and observations; it remains

* Life of Henry II. Vol. I. p. 276. + Gesta Stephani Reg. p. 918. Lib. 2.
‡ Sir John Peshall's Anthony Wood, p. 314, from the Osney MSS.
§ See Peshall's Anthony Wood, p. 234. ‖ Inquis. Edw. III. No. 80

only to add, as the result of them, *what* appears to have been the real plan of the castle, in the first Norman ages.*

In Pl. cxxix. F. 4.

a. Shews the Osney bridge; once existing, at that which, there is reason to believe, was the original Principal Entrance of the Castle. And which seems plainly to have been, by the description in the Rolls, through a square Tower at (*b*), nearly of the same construction with the tower of entrance that still remains at Arundel Castle: on which account we may fairly conclude, that from this tower there was also an ascent, by a covered way, and steep flight of steps, on the top of a wall (22), quite up to the Keep (*k*); the entrance to which staircase was, in all probability, by a narrow door, at (*y*); nearly in the same manner as at Arundel.

(*s*). Is the old strong Saxon tower; now called St. George's Tower; and still remaining.

c. Shews what was St. George's Church.

(*d*) (*d*). Apartments adjoining to it.

x. The antient Saxon crypt.

e. The Round Tower, rebuilt in the time of Henry III.

f. A square tower, adjoining to the original postern of the castle: which in succeeding ages became the Chief Entrance, on account of the decay of the Osney Gate.

* There is a very indifferent copy of *Agas*'s View of Oxford Castle, inserted in *Hearne*'s preface to *William of Newbury*, p. 88; together with a still worse representation of the castle, by *Daniel King*, as it appeared during the civil war, in Charles the First's time. In both of these, the north-eastern side of the inclosure is made to appear more flat, and more nearly approaching to a right line, than in the annexed plan. But the reason for adhering to such a delineation of the site of the outward walls as is here given, is, that the uncommon flatness of the north-east side, apparent in those two views, is conceived to have been occasioned, partly by the Osney gate having been pulled down; and partly by mere bad keeping, in those *bird's-eye* views.

There is a very indifferent representation also of St. George's Tower, in the same plate of *Hearne*'s.—But it is very remarkable, that, with all its faults, an appearance, very unlike a real Norman tower, in this building, is preserved in that plate; and at the same time the old oylets or loop-holes, at the top, are carefully shewn.

And on this occasion I cannot but add, that in Buck's south-west Prospect of the City of Oxford, may be seen, at one glance, both the *distance* beyond the walls of the castle, at which the tower called *Friar Bacon*'s study was placed; where an old *Saxon tower* of stone once stood in the time of *Ethelred*;—and also the nearness of Osney Abbey.

But this tower, if *Agas*'s representation is to be relied upon, seems rather to have stood close to the side of the gate; (after the manner of the *Black Tower* at *Cardiff;* than to have had the gateway pass through it, as at *Arundel;*—and this perhaps may account for the more strong fortification of the bridge of entry here, in the manner described in the preceding pages.

g g. Shews the long fortified bridge, belonging to this entrance.

h i l. Three other towers; which, in conformity to Agas's view, are here represented square; but which might probably have been some of them, round; as Agas was certainly mistaken in the representation of the tower (*e*).

k. The great decagon Keep of Robert D'Oiley, standing on an high mount; with the curious original deep well in its centre.*

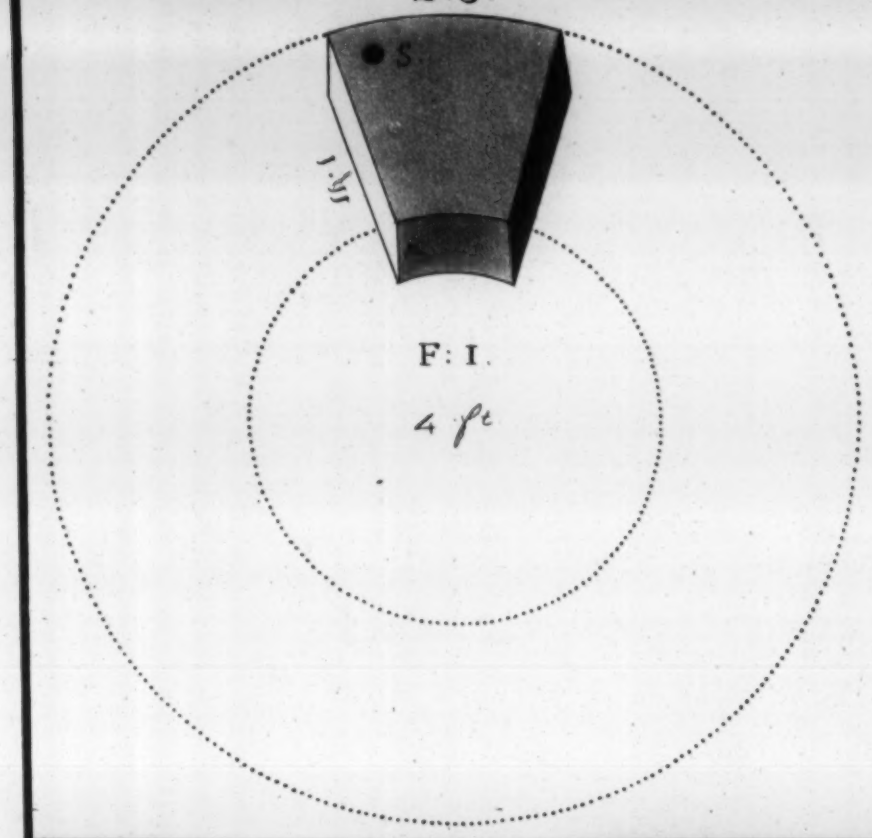
m. The great hall, built most probably in the very beginning of the reign of Edward I. when a more expanded mode of dwelling in these castles took place; and falling into decay, in the reign of Edward III. But the old Shire hall, in which were held the black assizes; was obviously the continuation of such a sort of building on this spot.

n n. The kitchen and its offices; and the chambers over them, mentioned in the record; which are placed *here*, in conformity with the situation of all such offices in Edward the First's time.

And it can hardly escape the observation of any curious person, that another strong indication of the Osney gate (*b*) having been originally the principal gate, arises both from this near situation of the antient hall; and its offices; and still more from St. George's Church having been placed by Robert D'Oiley, *for the use of the townsmen*, in the situation in which we find it stood, at (*c*).—For, if the townsmen were to have gone round, *usually*, by the other gate (*f*); it certainly was very strangely contrived, that the gate furthest from the church, and on

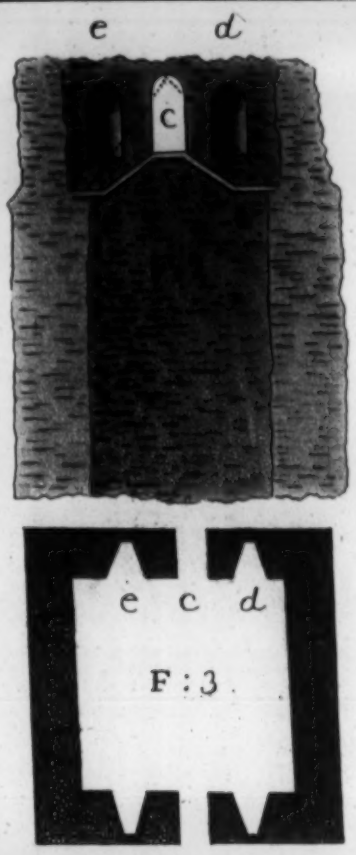
* I cannot help subjoining a wish, that my Lord Duke of Norfolk would, some time or other, cause the small subterraneous room, in the centre of the Keep of Arundel Castle, to have its floor dug up a little, in search of a similar well: or, if such should not be discovered in its centre, to have the place examined, that seems like an antient passage, walled up, on one side of this room; which might lead to a second flight of steps, going further down, to some well; whose mouth might have been placed lower in the mount, as at *Walling ford*.

2:3.



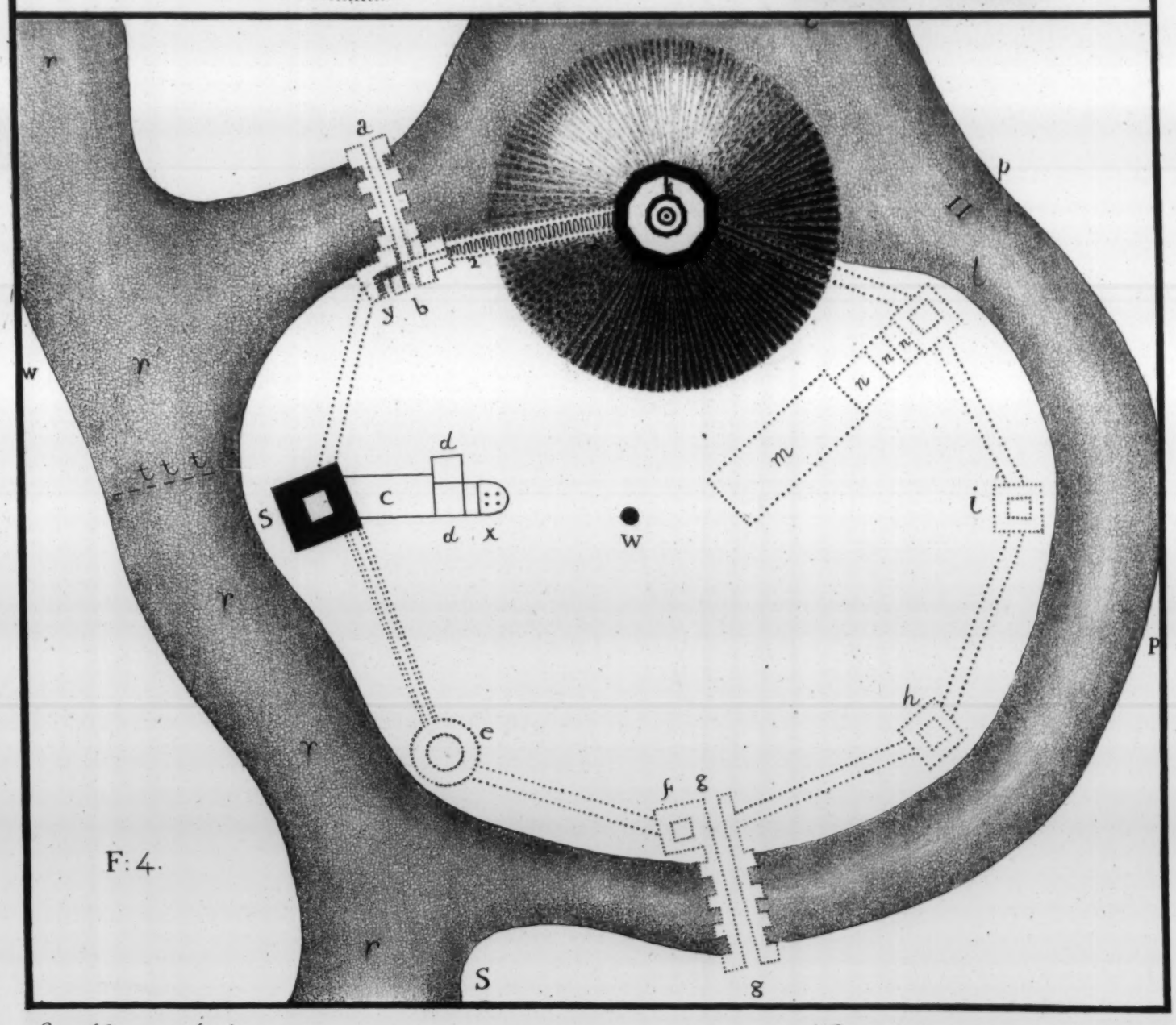
F: I.

4 ft



e c d

F: 3.



F: 4.

E, King, del.

G. Richardson & Son, Sculpt.

GR. III.
BRITISH MUSEUM

the opposite side from its door, should be that by which they were to enter.

r r r. Mark the branch of the river running by the Castle; which plainly seems to have been that called the Mill Stream, in the antient records; and which is mentioned, as protecting the wall, from the round Tower to St. George's Tower.

For causing the water to flow from hence, into the great ditch, surrounding the Castle; there most probably was very antiently a lock or dam here about (*t t t*), which might also be useful for a mill; protected by St. George's Tower (*s*), somewhat in the same manner as it has been proved there was formerly a dam, protected by one of the Towers of Tunbridge Castle; for the purpose of diverting the course of that river, in order to supply the works, surrounding that castle, with a part of its waters.

Such turning the stream, however, round the Castle at Oxford, has long been disused. And the ditches of the castle are now become, in most parts, dry;—and, being also, in part, filled up level; the present entrance of the castle is, on plain ground, about (*p*).

In the map annexed to Sir John Peshall's Account, a greater extent is given to the castle area, on the north side, than is assigned in this plan: and the ditch is represented at a greater distance from St. George's Tower, than I have placed it; but such situation of the ditch as is represented in the map alluded to, I take to have been occasioned, entirely by the new works thrown up in the year 1649; and which were destroyed in 1652.*

w. Shews nearly the place of the second well; mentioned to have been made in the reign of Henry the Second; which has lately been discovered, and cleared out; and is now again in actual use, near the present second gate of the Castle Prison: and is only about twenty-two feet in depth.

Thus far we may form satisfactory conclusions.—But *where* the malthouse, brewhouse, and stable, and the small houses, which are mentioned in the antient Rolls, stood; it is not of any sort of importance to determine. The general style of the original fortress, and of

* See Sir John Peshall's Account, p. 207.

its munitions, in its material parts, being our only concern; whilst we are endeavouring, in this, as in other instances, to trace the great *outline* of the gradual progress of arts, and architecture; and to illustrate the real history of mankind, by

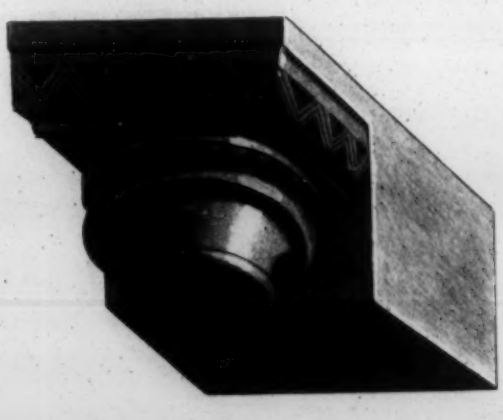
"*Catching the manners living, as they rise,*"*

* Pope's Essay on Man, Epist. 1. l. 14.

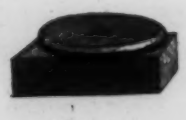
Fl. Pl. CXXX.

St George's Tower. & Saxon Capitals.

F.2.



F.3.



F.4.

F.5.

D. Harris, Del.

J. Caldwall, Sculp.

DIRECTIONS TO THE BOOKBINDER.

Plate CXXVI	-	to front	p. 8.
CXXVII	-	-	p. 12.
CXXVIII	-	-	p. 18.
CXXIX	-	-	p. 28.
CXXX	-	-	p. 30.